

Fusion

by megg

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Summary: A girl from the 'real world' takes a little trip to another universe....

1. Default Chapter Title

I walked down the street, head down as usual. The busy tourist traffic buzzed all around me. I looked up from time to time, to see the people hurrying from store to store, buying up every cheap souvenir they could find. Maine in the summer is nothing but wall to wall people, all of them rude and obnoxious, thinking they own the state. I'm not very nice to summer people.

My mind, however, was much farther away. I wished to be somewhere else, somewhere where I would be free of the pressures of my life. No debts, no bad credit, no boring, dead-end job. Just the fun and adventure I had always wanted but seldom knew. Little did I know I would get that wish, but it wouldn't turn out quite as I had hoped.

Raphael wandered through the lair, bored out of his shell. Splinter and Leonardo were meditating, and Michaelangelo was off tooling around on his new skateboard he'd found in a dumpster. Donatello was in his lab, working on some new formula he hoped would fix oil spills, or some junk like that.

"Hey Donnie" he said, "I'm gonna go find somethin' to do".

All he got for a response was a grunt, so he added "Yeah, I figure I may go take over the world, sounds like fun to me."

Donatello looked up. "Huh?"

"Never mind."

Raphael left the lair and headed for the street. Then remembered something.

"Aw balls, I forgot my disguise. Now I gotta go back there and admit I couldn't take over the world." He snorted and turned back towards the lair.

I sat in my apartment, watching some boring documentary on the old black and white TV that I had found in the basement. When my mother moved out, she took the cable with her, not that I cared. There were better things to do than watch TV. Except today. My neighbor was gone for the weekend and even though I had the key to his apartment, I felt uncomfortable just walking in there. So I sat on my green corduroy couch and watched Hitler's methods in exterminating the Jewish community.

I suppose I could have gotten in my car and driven somewhere, but money was so tight I just didn't have the money to buy gas, and it was a non-pay week. I could even have gone for a walk, but I just didn't have the energy. Same with cleaning the apartment, but since Mom had left, there wasn't much. Just my couch, the kitchen table, and the coffee table. My bedroom only had the twin bed and a dresser.

I hate getting paid every two weeks. I thought. _And I hate being fat, and I hate this place, and I hate my job!_ The list went on and on. At 5'6" and 220 pounds, I wasn't exactly a model. People told me all the time that I was pretty and shouldn't worry about it, but that's what low self-esteem does to you. And yet, I never really tried to do anything about it. My face was always my favorite part of myself. My hair had just recently been cut short, and surprisingly I loved the cut. I'm forever changing the color. This time it's a copper red and I was thinking of going blonde some day.

I decided I'd better quit thinking of destructive things, or I'd sink into another funk, so I thought of things that made me happy. I drifted off into my "happy place", where I was thin and beautiful, and kicking someone's ass.

I felt a soft breeze on my face, and I snapped out of my reverie.

"What the..?" There was a large vortex spinning in front of me, a very beautiful one that changed colors from blue to purple to pink and back. I was reminded of the show "Sliders".

I felt it pulling at me, like it wanted me to go somewhere. I thought about it a minute and said, "Well, why the hell not?"

I ran to my bedroom and grabbed a backpack, packing a few necessities, (I never go anywhere without clean underwear), and ran back to the living room. Checking to make sure my wallet was in my pocket, I walked towards the vortex. As I entered it, I felt my body lift up and drift away. It was the most wonderful thing I had ever felt.

And then everything changed. The swirling colors gave way to black, and coldness set in that went straight to my bones. Something huge

loomed before me, blocking my path. It picked me up in one cold hand and I felt a pain like nothing I had ever experienced before. It was like something was sucking my very life through my skin. I screamed, more out of pain and fright than the hope that someone would hear me.

As suddenly as it had begun, it was over. I began drifting again and as I looked back, I saw the black creature again. It seemed to be in conflict with a very bright figure that, thankfully, was winning.

My vision dimmed, and I began to fall. The air was knocked out of me as I hit cold, hard, very wet ground. I heard a voice from somewhere.

"What the hell?"

That's what I'd like to know. I thought. My vision began returning and I looked around. I was in a dark stone tunnel of some kind. I searched for the person who had spoken, but saw only a dark shadow a little ways ahead of me.

The shadow moved towards me very quickly, and it bent over and grabbed me by the front of the shirt, hauling me upwards. The sudden movement made me dizzy so I couldn't see its face for a moment.

I looked down at the hands that held me and thought, _damn, this guy is strong. And green. GREEN?_

I looked up and saw a face I never ever expected to see. Was I dreaming? Dead, perhaps?

"Raphael?" I said. This made him very angry, and he put his face right in mine and growled "Who are you, how did you get here, and how in _hell_ do you know my name?"

"M..My name is Maggie," I managed to stammer, "and I'm not real sure how I got here. "

I heard footsteps running towards us, and looked around. My eyes got real big as I realized just who was coming our way. I couldn't believe it, I actually saw Splinter running towards me. I had watched the show hundreds of times, and had always wished to meet them, but to actually see them, talk to them? I thought I was going mad.

"Put her down, Raphael." Splinter said. Raphael did all right, just not very gently. I fell to a heap on the ground, only then realizing that somehow, my pants had fallen off. Greatly embarrassed, I got up and pulled them back on. Or, tried to that is. For some reason, they were just too big. What is going ON? I wondered. It was a good thing I had a belt, though I needed a new hole just to get them to stay on.

I turned around and looked at Splinter. Not realizing I was speaking out loud, I said, "You guys are real? That's impossible!" I began to babble about how they were cartoons and couldn't possibly exist.

From behind me, Raphael said, "Yeah, we're real. But that still doesn't explain how you know us!" He spoke past me to Splinter and said, "I think she's a spy, we should get rid of her." He looked at

me with malice in his eyes, and I began to be afraid for my life.

"She is not a spy"

Raphael exclaimed "_What_? How do you know?"

Splinter turned and began to walk back the way he came. "It would be best if I were to explain this somewhere more comfortable."

"You're going to take her to the lair? Are you nuts?"

Splinter turned around. "I am not crazy Raphael. You must trust me."

"It's not you I don't trust, Master."

"If it makes you feel better," Splinter said, "You may blindfold her."

It was my turn to be angry. "Now wait just a second, I am not going to be blindfolded!"

Raphael grabbed me from behind. "Oh yes you are."

I felt a cloth go over my eyes. It made my glasses dig into my face, which hurt, and made me even angrier. I tried to struggle, but Raphael was just too strong. He pushed me along the tunnel, through water and who-knows-what else.

Then I noticed something. It really hurt my arms where he had a hold of me. He was digging the skin right into my bones, which, given my body structure, really wasn't possible. Then I realized I could feel his hands all the way around my arms. Either he had big hands, or something was very wrong. And then I realized, I felt very light. Like a hundred pounds had been magically spirited away. Only, that wasn't possible. Was it? Of course, it wasn't exactly possible to be walking through a sewer with a turtle, either.

All the way to the lair my pants kept threatening to fall back down. At one point I thought they would so I asked to stop to re-adjust. Raphael was about to refuse, until I pointed out that that he would either have to stop, or hold my pants up for me. We stopped. I tried to make another hole in my belt, which was nearly impossible due to the blindfold. Raphael let go of my arms and grabbed the end of my belt. I felt a tug, and then he said "There, all fixed, now hurry up."

I felt my belt, and discovered a new, perfectly round hole. Then I remembered what his weapon was. Well, I thought, those things are useful after all.

Soon we arrived at "the lair". I was kind of curious, I had always wondered at the layout, but I knew it wasn't going to be that easy. I was sure Raphael would not allow me much further in than the living-room area. I could hear a TV going very loudly as we approached, but it was turned off by the time we got there. I could hear a gasp of surprise from in front of me. I'm sure I must have

looked strange, blindfolded and wearing really huge clothing.

"What is going on, Raph?" From the tone he took, I guessed it was Leonardo speaking.

"This kid just dropped out of the sky in front of me. Master Splinter made me bring her back."

"Master Splinter?"

"I will explain Leonardo." Aha! I was right. _I love being right_.

"Wait," I cut in, "before anyone explains anything, can you _please_ take this blindfold off? It hurts."

"Of course, my child." said Splinter.

"Master, I don't think.." Splinter cut him off with a simple "Raphael."

Raphael grumbled and grudgingly and not-so-gently removed the cloth. I was struck blind by the lights briefly, and slowly my vision cleared. I had to adjust my glasses; they had dug right into my nose. The first thing I saw was Splinter, smiling gently at me. I smiled back, how could I not? He seemed to emanate kindness.

I then looked around more. Raphael was still giving me an evil look. I felt like being petulant and sticking my tongue out at him, but that could very well result in no more tongue, so I looked away. Leonardo was still staring at me as if I was some kind of alien. Am I that ugly?

I then heard more voices coming from a tunnel to my right. Donatello and Michaelangelo came in, and stopped in their tracks. They had been arguing about what kind of pizza to get. Michaelangelo gave a low whistle, then grinned at me. "Who is this?" he asked.

Splinter looked at me. "Have a seat." I sat carefully down on the ripped, rickety looking couch. I was afraid I would crash right through the seat, but it held. Michaelangelo hurried over and plopped down beside me. I winced, figuring the whole thing would collapse, until Donatello and Leonardo did the same thing. Well, looks can be deceiving, I guess.

Raphael stayed where he stood, looking for all the world like a soldier on patrol. Splinter crouched down into a lotus position on a small mat near the door.

"Now, you are probably wondering what it was that attacked you in the vortex."

I raised my eyebrows. "How did you know about that?"

"I was dreamwalking, and felt an evil presence. I tracked it through the DreamWays and found you."

"So you were what I saw defending me? Thank you!"

"You are welcome." He said with a smile. "This demon was a SoulEater."

SoulEaters absorb all the energy possible out of its victims, leaving them a dry husk. It is fortunate you were freed in time. As it is, you will never be able to regain much of the energy he drained from you."

"And this is why my clothes are falling off?" Splinter nodded.
"Groovy." Michaelangelo chuckled.

"OK, I have another question. What are the DreamWays?" I wanted to know just how I got here.

"The DreamWays are pathways through time and space. They usually are a random occurrence, but they may also be called into existence if one is skilled enough. Even I cannot call a DreamWay."

Raphael butted in, "This is all just fascinating Master, but that doesn't explain how she knows who we are."

I looked up from trying to push Michaelangelo back over, he had been slowly edging closer the entire time. "Well," I began, "Where I come from, you guys are, well, fiction. You exist to us as cartoons, and comic books, movies, action figures, and T-shirts. Everyone knows who you are."

This interested Michaelangelo. "You mean, like, we're on TV? Cool!"

Raphael wasn't convinced. "How do I know you're telling the truth?"

I reached into my pocket and pulled out the Ninja Turtles keychain I'd had since I was ten. It was a little plastic thing, with the four of them in their character ninja poses. The title was across the bottom.

"Holy shit!"

"Wow!"

"Can I have that?" The last came from Michaelangelo, who was trying to grab the keychain from my hand. I had to stand up and back away to avoid him. I couldn't help but laugh though.

Leonardo, who had been silent the whole time, said "What do we do now, Master?"

A good question. I didn't really want to go home, and wasn't sure if that was even possible. Splinter himself had said that DreamWays were a random anomaly. But I couldn't stay here, could I?

"It is highly unlikely that we will be able to send her home. If she wishes, she may stay here, or if not, perhaps April will let her stay there for a time. "

As much as I disliked the idea of going home, the thought that I might be stuck here still frightened me. As much as I thought I knew about these guys, it was still someone's artistic interpretations. Things could be very different.

Everyone looked at me. Mikey wanted me to stay, I could see that. He

had that pleading, puppy-dog look on his face. Raph obviously didn't like the idea at all. I looked to Leo and Donny. They just shrugged. _Gee thanks guys, you're a big help_.

Aloud, I expressed my uncertainties. "I really don't know. I hate being a mooch or a burden to anyone, and I don't want to upset anyone either." I looked at Raphael while saying that. He had a surprised look on his face. "I'd like to be able to get some sort of job, and at least help out financially. Perhaps it would be best to stay topside for a while."

"As you wish." said Splinter, and he went to call April. While he was gone, Michaelangelo came up to me and put his arm on my shoulders. "You know, you can visit any time you want. As long as you bring a pizza." I laughed, and he gave me a hug, which I returned. It was really nice to be accepted.

Splinter returned. "April says you may stay with her as long as you like. I have explained everything to her. She will lend you some clothing, also." He smiled at that, and I remembered my current fashion situation.

"Actually," I said, "This is what people are wearing lately anyway."

"She is on her way to pick you up." Splinter continued. "Actually, she seemed quite happy to have the company of someone other than a turtle."

I smiled. "I don't know how to thank you."

Michaelangelo piped up "I do!"

I stuck my tongue out at him, and then continued. "You didn't have to bring me down here and expose your secret. You had no idea who I am."

"You are most welcome."

At this point, Donatello spoke up. "Hey, are you hungry? We were just about to order out."

"Hey, great." I said, "I'll take an anchovy and peanut butter pizza."

They all stared at me in disbelief. "I'm kidding!"

Well gee, I'm glad that's not true, I don't think I could stomach that.

We finally decided on pepperoni and sausage, after much arguing between Michaelangelo and Raphael. The order was called in, and it was Donatello's turn to retrieve it. Before he could return, April arrived.

From a corridor across the lair I heard a cheery "Hey guys!"

Michaelangelo looked up from the comic he decided to read while he was waiting. "April! What'd you bring us?"

April just laughed and continued walking towards us. I was amazed, she was beautiful. She looked a little bit like the cartoons, with red hair, but it was longer, and straight, and she definitely wasn't as busty. I see someone in the cartoon industry likes to "embellish" things. She had bright blue eyes, and was a couple inches taller than me. She looked every bit the intrepid reporter, with jeans and loafers and a rather nice sport jacket over a white T-shirt. I wondered how her shoes stayed so cleanâ€|

She came towards me with a hand out. "It's nice to meet you!" she said. I shook her hand, she had a firm grip.

"You too!" I said. _You have no idea!_ Too strange, I was meeting April O'Neill.

Just then, Donatello came in with 2 pizzas and a 6-pack of soda. I smiled when I saw what soda it was he had. "I always knew you guys were the Mt. Dew kind."

Michaelangelo grinned. "Gotta love that sugar rush!"

I just laughed. I felt a tap on my shoulder, and looked over to see a paper plate with pizza on it. "Oh great, thanks!" I looked up to see it was Raphael who had given it to me. I smiled at him, more to freak him out than anything, and he got a peculiar look on his face. Uh ohâ€|

We all sat down in the living area, as there weren't enough chairs in the kitchen to accommodate all of us. I sat on the end of the couch with, as usual, Michaelangelo right beside me, and April beside him. The others dragged chairs in from the kitchen. We told dirty jokes most of the time, some of which made even me blush, and I was a self-described pervert.

I tried my best to ignore Raphael, who continued to give me strange looks. I wondered what he was thinking. Hopefully, it wasn't that he wanted to wring my neck.

An hour and a half later, full of pizza and high spirits, April and I left the lair. We said our good-byes, and the guys promised they would come visit. That made me strangely happy.

We headed out a tunnel I had not been down, and as we turned a corner, there was a beautiful blue Mustang convertible.

We got in and fastened our seatbelts. Then it struck me.

"How did you get your car down here?"

April just smiled, gunned the engine, and threw the car into reverse. "You'll see!"

She turned around, and floored the gas pedal. We headed down another tunnel at breakneck pace. I saw a light approaching, but April didn't even slow down. In fact, she seemed to be going faster! The light got

rapidly closer, and I could see a very large iron grating across the front. I covered my head, fearing that April was insane.

Then, it was light all around us. I looked around and saw we were on a dirt road heading towards the city. April was laughing at me. _My God, she's evil!_ I looked behind us and saw the grating lift back up to cover the tunnel.

It turned out that the Turtles had converted a small outlet coming off a little used road along the shore, so that she would not have to trudge through the sewers. Kind of like the cartoon. I wonder what else is similar. It operated on a remote control that looked like a garage door opener. I laughed to myself. No wonder her shoes were clean.

I looked over at April, who was still grinning. "I'm sorry about that, I just couldn't help it."

I smiled back at her. "It's OK, I suppose I would have done the same thing.. Maybe.."

She laughed.

It took about an hour to get back to her apartment. It was rush hour, and the traffic was heavy. The wait didn't matter to me though. I was too fascinated by the city itself. It seemed a lot larger than it was the last time I had been there. Perhaps it was. Technically, I'd never been there before.

I was awakened from my stupor by April. "We're here!"

I looked up at a huge high-rise apartment building. "Holy cow! You live here?"

She smiled, "Yep!"

I just might like it hereâ€¦

We drove the car into an underground parking garage, parked, and headed for an elevator. April hit the button for floor 27. _27?_ The elevator was incredibly fast, I almost got carsick. In an elevator! I laughed at that thought.

April looked at me. "Carsick in an elevator, eh?" I grinned at her.

When the elevator stopped, the doors opened, but not into a hallway as I had expected. All that was in front of us was a panel with a card slot and what looked to be an intercom. April fished a white card with a magnetic strip out of her purse and slid it through. The door lifted up with a whoosh, and we stepped right into her apartment.

"Does this take up the entire floor?" April nodded. "Wow!"

She had it beautifully decorated. The walls and carpeting were in varying shades of rose and mauve, and there were flowers everywhere. From the entry, which contained a coat rack and a small table, we

headed for the living room. There were 2 rose patterned couches facing each other with a mahogany coffee table in between. To the left was the kitchen, which was incredibly shiny. She had copper pots and pans hanging from the ceiling, along with a rack of glasses and other assorted gadgets.

I just stood in the center of the room with my eyes wide open. I must have been attracting flies because I heard April laugh and say, "Come on, stop staring and come look at this."

She was speaking from across the living room. I looked and saw that she was out on a balcony. _Oh dear..._ I stepped very carefully out onto the rather large balcony, which overlooked the street we'd driven up on. From 27 stories up, the city looked incredibly small, but it was beautiful nonetheless. I almost forgot I was afraid of heights. Almost. Ever get the feeling like you know you're going to fall over, even though you're well barricaded?

I decided I'd had about enough of the balcony, and went back into the living room. April followed. After I tripped over my pant leg for the third time, April remembered she was going to lend me something better to wear. She led me to her bedroom, which was decorated in blue and cherry wood. A door led off into a brightly-lit bathroom. April opened a door to reveal a huge walk-in closet. I proceeded to drool, while she looked around for something appropriate. Since I was shorter than she was, it was kind of difficult, but in the end, she pulled out a pair of jeans.

"Here, try these on. I bought them a few years ago, and didn't like them, and I hate returning things, so I just stuck them in here. You can probably just roll up the bottoms. Kids do that these days anyway." The last, she said with a grin.

I took them into the bathroom and tried them on. Not only were they too long, they were a little too large. _Well that's a first!_ But with a belt, they'd be just fine, so I rolled them up. For the first time since I'd been in this... dimension, for lack of a better word, I stopped and took a close look at myself. My face was a lot thinner, almost skeletal, but not as bad as I thought it would look. The rest of me was pretty flat, even my chest, something I was definitely not used to. No wonder I felt so light. All in all, I was rather pleased. The jeans looked great, despite being a little large, but my shirt was hanging off my shoulders. I looked down at my legs again, to admire, and brushed my hair out of my face for about the thousandth time. Then it struck me. Wasn't my hair short just a few hours ago? I looked at the mirror again, and noticed that my hair was down almost to my waist. The bottom 3 inches or so were still bright red from where I had dyed it recently. But why did it grow like that? I was completely confused, but I wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth, so I simply accepted it. I had to admit though, I looked pretty damn good.. _No wonder they all looked at me so strangely, I'm a hottie!_ I giggled at that thought.

April knocked on the door to see if I was still alive in there. I opened it up and she looked at me appraisingly. "Well, they're a little big, but they'll do. I'll get you a belt." She also got a T-shirt out, which I put on. Since I was so flat, there was absolutely nothing I could do about a bra, but that didn't matter since I didn't really need one anyway, and I had clean underwear in my backpack. My old clothes were put in a basket for washing later.

I felt much better with the new clothing. At least I wasn't tripping anymore. My shoes were fine, my feet hadn't really changed much. Luckily, I hadn't gotten them too dirty in the sewers. Good thing too, they were my favorite shoes.

The phone rang. April went to answer it. As she talked, she got a big smile on her face. I wondered who it was. She said goodbye, and set it down.

"That was my boyfriend Casey." She said. "He's on his way over."

"Casey.. Jones?" I asked.

She gave me a puzzled look. "No, Casey Kowalski."

"Oh, whoops." _No wonder they changed it_.

As we waited for Casey to arrive, we chatted about "girl things." April told me that Casey was a stockbroker on Wall Street, something I couldn't picture. I found myself chattering aimlessly about all the messed up romances I'd ever had, not really that many actually, but oh well.

About twenty minutes later, the door chimed. April jumped up to answer it. It was Casey. He was wearing a black three-piece suit, shiny shoes, and nice tie. He was strikingly handsome, very much like he was pictured back home. Very, very muscular. He fit the suit well.

He walked over to April, and swept her into his arms with a big kiss. I turned red and looked the other way. I couldn't help but smile though, it was so sweet.

April introduced me. I wondered if he knew about the guys, but when she began to describe my situation, she included them, so I guess he did. He gave me a broad smile that made my stomach flip and held out his hand. I almost didn't take it, I was too busy gaping. April giggled and whispered in my ear, "He has that effect on everyone." I blushed and smiled at her.

Since we'd eaten rather recently, neither of us were very hungry but Casey was, so April went into her kitchen and whipped him up an omelet. He ate it at the bar that separated the kitchen from the living room, and as he ate, we all talked. He asked me a lot about where I was from, and what I knew about them all. I told him about our image of him, and he smiled when I told him that his last name was Jones to us. "I would have like that better, you don't know what kind of grief I went through in grade school."

It was very easy to like Casey, he was a really nice guy. No wonder April loves him so muchâ€|

The phone rang again. This time, it was Donatello. He said there was some problem downtown they were going to investigate, and that they needed us there as well. I looked at April. She shrugged her shoulders. _That's odd, what could they need us for?_

2. Default Chapter Title

April hung up the phone and grabbed her keys. "Well, let's roll." I went into the bedroom and got my sweatshirt. Just in case.

Casey decided he'd better come with us. I was in full agreement. Fortunately, so was April. Something just didn't smell right about this.

We took the elevator back down to the garage and got in April's car. As we took off down the street, I decided it was just as fun to sit in the back as it was the front! There's nothing like riding in a convertible, especially when the driver is insane and goes at least fifteen miles over the speed limit. Needless to say, we reached our destination rather quickly.

The address Donatello had given April turned out to be, what else, an abandoned warehouse. _Typical.. Some villains just have no imagination_. We parked and headed for the entrance. As much as I thought I'd be one to just plunge into danger full-steam, I was very apprehensive about walking into this warehouse. It had to be a trap of some kind. I almost stated out loud that I wasn't going any further, but by the time I got my mouth open, April had opened the door and gone inside. So much for that.. Casey followed her, and I was right behind Casey. _Well, if it's a trap, at least we've got Casey._ This thought brought me no comfort.

I looked around. "Well, nobody's here, let's go." "No way," said April, "We've got to find out what's going on."

—

It's a wonder she's still alive, if she keeps doing stuff like this. Being a reporter is surely hazardous to your health.

—

We walked further into the warehouse, thankfully being very slow and cautious. It was very, very silent. A little _too_ silent. There was an open area in the center. Still, nothing happened. "Well," I said. "Seems to me that if they were here, they'd have shown themselves by now."

"I'm beginning to think you're right," said April. "We better go." She seemed disappointed that nothing was going on. We turned to leave, but suddenly found the way blocked by a set of iron bars that came crashing down from the ceiling. We turned around, but found similar bars at all four exits. We were caged in.

A voice began laughing above us. I looked up, trying to see who it was, but several bright lights had been turned on, blinding us.

"Oh that was too easy," laughed the voice. "Really Miss O'Neill, I would have thought you'd be smarter than that!"

Comprehension lit up April's face. "Shredder!"

"That's right, how very clever of you." Then we heard another voice, Donatello's. "Is this who you were looking for, April? We need your

help downtown."

"That was you? Damnit!"

I couldn't help myself. "April, you really need to get Caller ID."

Shredder laughed again. "Ahh yes, and you've brought our little dimensional traveler as well. Pleased to meet you, Miss Williams."

I couldn't help but be sarcastic. "Charmed, I'm sure! Hey wait a minute, how do you know who I am?"

"I know everything, weren't you aware of that?"

I snorted. So did April.

"My computers picked up the temporal disturbance. I sent my Foot Soldiers to investigate. Missing something, are we?" Something dropped onto the floor in front of me.

"My wallet! I must have dropped it when I fell in the sewers. You'd think I'd have noticed." I picked it up and opened it. Everything was as it had been. Not that there was much to take. I only had about ten dollars and even so, I wasn't sure if the money was the same here.

Now Casey stepped in. "All right Shredder, enough with the pleasantries, what is going on?"

"It's simple. All I want is the girl. You and Miss. O'Neill may leave."

The three of us started talking all at once. "Say what? Nuh uh, no way!" "No way! You're insane!"

"Ridiculous!"

Shredders voice boomed out, "SILENCE."

We shut up all at once. Except, I was a little late. "Screw you!" floated out before I could stop it. _Whoops!_

"An interesting proposal. Perhaps I will take you up on that later." _Yikes!_ "However, now, we must be going."

As he said this, several Foot ninjas jumped down among us. Two of them me by the arms, two grabbed April the same way. It took four to get Casey subdued. I attempted to struggle, but they were just too strong. So, remembering a little from a self-defense class, I tried aiming some strategic kicks. Unfortunately, they were wearing cups. _They_ never _wear cups in the movies! Jeez._

The bars lifted, and the Foot dragged April and Casey towards the front doors. I was taken in the opposite direction, towards the back. I continued to struggle, even though it was futile. I could see April and Casey trying to get away too, even though it seemed they were being released. I finally had to give up, it was wearing me out rather quickly, and I wanted to be alert. I think they got suspicious when I abruptly quit trying to get away, because they held my arms

even tighter.

I really wasn't all that worried. I knew April would get help. I was also extremely overconfident in my abilities. I was sure that wherever they took me, I could escape.

I didn't know how wrong I was.

The Foot guys shoved me into the back of a black van, locked the doors, and jumped in the front. The engine revved, and I was tossed towards the back as they took off quickly. I stumbled to my feet and looked around, trying to find some sort of escape. There were no side doors, no windows, and was completely empty. Actually, it was almost pitch black, the only light coming in through the crack in the back doors. I tried the doors, but there was no way to get them open without the key. I tried yelling and kicking the walls, but that got me nowhere. I guess this kind of thing happens a lot in New York or something. Defeated, I slumped to the floor and hugged my knees.

—

Well now what, Miss "I can escape from anything"?

—

Shut up. I told myself._ I'llâ€¦ think of something._

Whoever was driving must have been a real lunatic, because he took the corners, hardly using the brakes at all. As a result I got very bruised very quickly, especially on my backside and arms. I yelled up to the front to slow down, but, as I expected, got no answer. So I kicked the wall separating the front from the rear. It was then that I noticed that the metal separator was very thin. I could probably get through it if I kicked enough. _Yeah, then what, fight my way through two highly trained ninjas? Hardly. Try again, genius._

My brain was starting to get on my nerves.

The drive took a very long time. Luckily, after a while the road straightened out, so there were no more sharp corners. _We must be headed out of the city_. I decided to lie down because I was getting sleepy, thinking that if the ride had been this long, it was probably going to take a while longer. Taking off my sweatshirt, I used it to insulate my top half from the cold floor, and curled up. Despite the bouncing of the van over potholes and such, I found myself drifting off to sleep. _Always knew I could sleep through anythingâ€¦|_

The next thing I heard was a voice telling me to wake up. Apparently, I was too slow in doing so because next I felt someone jerking on my arm. I found myself pulled to my feet, and dragged out of the van. Luckily, I had had my arms wrapped around my sweatshirt, so it came with me. _Who knows what kind of cold damp cell they'll throw me inâ€¦|?_

The brightness of the sun temporarily blinded me. _No, wait, that's not the sun, it's too late for that. Where am I?_ Once my vision

cleared, I looked around and found myself in a large metal chamber, brightly lit by a huge light on the ceiling. I didn't have long to look around, however, as they almost immediately began dragging me towards one of the doors set in a far wall. Once we reached the door, one of the Foot placed his palm on a plate beside it. The door opened, revealing a long hallway. However, we didn't go very far down, as the first door we came to was the one we stopped at. Again, the door opened with a palm print. Inside this one was a plain metal room, with a toilet, a sink, and a cot with a mattress, thin blanket, and pillow. They shoved me inside, and the door slid shut behind me.

I stood for a moment, staring at the door in disbelief. There was no way to escape from the room, and even if I could, I'd probably have to get through that chamber without being seen, which was unlikely. Then I'd have to figure out just where I was, and get back to the city. Nope, it looked like I was going to be there for a while. I sank down on the bed and leaned against the wall, boredom already setting in.

The walls were cold, so I put my sweatshirt back on and huddled up. Actually, the whole room seemed to be getting colder by the minute. After a while, I needed to put the blanket around me as well. It wasn't long before I could see my breath. _What is going on?_ Were they trying to freeze me to death? I began to get sleepy again, and couldn't help but drop off into uncomfortable slumber.

I awoke to blessed warmth. I opened my eyes, and found that I seemed to be in the same room before. Yet, it was warm again. _Some kind of test?_ Who knows. All I cared about was that I was warm again. I sat, contemplating my situation, when the door opened. A Foot walked in. He had nothing in his hands. I couldn't help but think that he looked like some kind of insect from a horror movie, wearing the black dogi with the hood that had the metal screens over the eyes. He came over.

"Get up, let's go."

"Why?"

"Because I said so, now move it!"

"And who are you?"

"None of your business, let's go!"

"Go where?"

I knew I was pushing it, but I'd had enough of being dragged around. Besides, I wondered if they were maybe just all talk.

They weren't. He pulled out a gun and said, "Let's go, NOW!"

"All right, all right, I'm coming!" I wasn't about to mess around when a gun was involved.

He grabbed my arm, which by this time was getting pretty sore from

all the rough treatment.

"Jeez," I said, "You could have asked nicely."

He didn't answer. I was secretly satisfied that I had had the last word.

Instead of heading for the central chamber, we headed in the opposite direction, down the hall. At the very end was a door, which he opened. Inside was a huge desk that took up most of the center of the room. Behind it were several computer screens, all flashing various bits of information.

The Foot beside me spoke. "I've brought her, Sir."

I noticed that the chair behind the desk was turned, facing the computer screens. _This place is so incredibly typical, makes me want to puke._ The voice that came from the chair was of course, familiar.

"Good. You may leave."

The Foot guy left by the same door we came in. The guy in the chair turned around. It was Shredder, of course, only he didn't have the helmet on. That, I could see, was on a table behind the desk. I had to admit; he was pretty damned good looking. He looked just like the cartoon version of him. _God I'm superficialâ€¦_ There were no scars on his face that I could tell.

He just sat there and stared at me with those piercing black eyes, until I couldn't help but look away.

"So what is it you want, Shredder?" I felt odd saying his name.

"What makes you think there's something I want?" He was toying with me.

"Well let's see. You trick us into going to that warehouse, jump us, drag me off into a van that was in an awful hurry to get away, lock me in a freezing cold cell, seem to know all about me, and claim I'm the only one wanted. Gee, guess I'm wrong, maybe you did it just for fun!"

Shredder raised one eyebrow at me. _Uh oh_. But he said nothing. He turned back around in the chair, to face the wall of monitors. After a moment, he said, "Have a seat."

There were two chairs in front of the desk, but I wasn't in the mood to be polite or formal. I folded my arms and stood my ground.

Shredder turned back around. He pushed a button on the desktop, and one of the chairs began to move. It raced around behind me. I tried to avoid it, but it was too fast. It slammed up behind my knees, knocking me into the seat. A metal band came around my midriff, blocking me in.

"I said, have a seat."

Attempts to escape the chair were futile. It rolled to its former place in front of the desk, and was still.

He gave me a withering look. "It isn't wise to reject my hospitality."

I bit down the urge to laugh. "_Hospitality?_ I don't consider being strapped to my chair very hospitable."

Shredder laughed a rather evil laugh that sent a chill up my spine. "You're lucky. You're alive, aren't you?"

I wasn't about to melt with fear into a little puddle. "Just tell me what you want with me!"

"What I want is..." A beeping from the console in front of him interrupted. He hit a different button, and said, "Yes, what is it?"

"He's here, sir." _Who's here?_

"Excellent." Shredder gave me a triumphant look. "Well now, you get to meet _my_ master."

I was confused. "You have a master? You mean, you're not in charge?" This surprised me, but I also thought it was kind of funny. I grinned.

"Don't look so amused, you do not know all you think you do."

I heard the door slide open behind me, and a voice.. _So familiar.._ "Well done Shredder, you have pleased me."

_No. Oh no, please no.. _I was afraid to turn around, it just couldn't be!_

—

Leonardo..

—

I didn't dare turn around, afraid to have my suspicions confirmed. I didn't have to; he came around to the desk to face me. I didn't know what to say.

"Speechless for once, I see." Leonardo had an amused smirk on his face.

Fear dissolved into anger. I wanted to slap that look off his face.

"Hardly." I spat out. "What is going on here? Why are you doing this? How could you do this to Splinter, to your brothers?"

Leonardo laughed. "You have no idea what it's like, having to be 'teacher's pet' all the time. Having to 'Yes Master Splinter' this and 'Oh no Master Splinter' that. Growing up with the others, having

to deal with their petty problems. Do you know what it's like, to live your years saying 'Yes Master' to a rat? Bah! It's degrading. I've always known that I was the one meant to be master, not him!"

>
 I could not believe what I was hearing. "Splinter rescued you from that sewer, taught you everything you know, raised you as his own son, when he could have left you there to die. Does that mean nothing to you?"

>
 A flicker of indecision crossed his face, which quickly dissolved to his former sneer. "No, it doesn't. I have
> learned more here, with the Foot, than I ever learned from him."

> Leonardo moved towards the desk, relaxing into the chair that Shredder hurriedly vacated. He steepled his
 fingers into what I supposed was an attempt to look menacing, when he only succeeded in looking

> silly.

> "Enough chatter. I suppose you wonder why I have brought you here, and exposed my true self to you in
 this manner."

>
 "No, I like sitting here not knowing what's going on. It's fun for me."

>
 Leonardo's face twisted into anger. "This is not a game, girl. I suggest you be a little more

> cooperative with us, you'll find it much easier on yourself that way."

> "What could you possibly want from me? You know more about the other three and Splinter than I'll ever
 know, you can't want information on them. In fact, you could have destroyed them a long time ago.

> Why haven't you?"

> "Timing is everything, as you'll soon see. I will wait for when the time is right, and then I will squash them
 like the vermin they are!"

>
 Leonardo was getting way too into this villain thing. I had the feeling though, that timing wasn't the

> only thing keeping him from attacking his family.

> "As for what I want from you, it is simple. I want you to create for me a Dream Way into your world."

> "What? Are you serious? You heard Master Splinter, nobody can control those things, least of all

> me!"

> "Don't lie to me, I know you created that Dream Way. And you will do it again, or things

> will get very uncomfortable for you very quickly. The energy readings I get from you are way above
 any normal human, you must have the power that creates these vortexes."

>
 "Uhm, hello, you forget I'm not from around here. How do you know that what you get from me isn't normal where I come from?"

>
 "Because, you are not the first to arrive this way."

>
 "I.. I'm not the only one from my dimension here?" I was shocked down to my toes. How was it that others

> from home were here too?

> "No, you're not. And your energy levels are considerably higher than others from your own home."

> "Wait, how do you know they're from the same place I am?"

> "Because your brains waves, and those of your people, operate on a different frequency than those of the
 humans here. Yet, yours all match. Perfectly."

>
 "Where are the others? Are they still here? If you've hurt themâ€¦" I really couldn't threaten him, but I

> figured I'd give it a shot anyway.

> "They are all alive. For now. Their health depends on how well you cooperate with us. Behave, and they
 will live. I may even let you send them home."
>
 "I've already told you, I can't do it! It's impossible."
But... I had never considered myself a hero before, but
> there had to be something I could do. I couldn't let those people die just because they were wrong about
 me.
>
 Leonardo erupted in anger, leaping from the chair and coming towards me. For the first time, I felt truly
> afraid of him. He leaned towards me, yelling in my face.

> "You can do it, and you _will_! Do not prove me wrong in this, or so help me I will kill you
> with my bare hands!"

> Even fear could not override my overly large mouth.

> "Fine, look like a fool, see if I care."

> For a minute, Leo looked like he might literally explode, and then he grabbed me by the front of my shirt, as if to drag me out of my chair and give me the beating of my life. However, he forgot I was still strapped
 in. He only managed to pull the chair forwards, before letting go and stalking away. _Phew... Saved by
> the chair.. He moved to stand near a wall, suddenly absorbed in thought.
>
 There was another beep from the desk. Shredder pushed a button, and looked at the screens behind him.
> The one in the center changed, to show the large bay area I had first seen after leaving the van. I could
 see four small figures attempting to sneak across the bottom part of the screen.
>
 "Master?" Shredder said. "They've arrived."
>
 Leonardo looked up from his thoughts. "They're _inside_? Damnit! I told you to stop them _outside_ the compound!"
>
 "I am sorry, sir. They must have won their way past the guards."
>
 "If they're not dead already, have them all killed. Nobody fails me."
>
 I could hardly believe that Leonardo could be so cold and heartless. What had happened to make him this
> way?

> *****

> It took April and Casey only a few minutes to get back to the others. Raphael was ready to leave
 immediately, but Michaelangelo and Donatello were more hesitant. They wanted to have Leonardo
> with them, but he couldn't be found. He had disappeared shortly after Maggie left with April. Raphael
 found this very suspicious. Leonardo disappeared much too frequently lately. He brooded about it on
> the couch.

> As though he could read his mind, Splinter said to Raphael, "Yes, I do not like his disappearance either, but
 I do not wish to think that Leonardo may be doing harm." The look in his eyes was sad, betraying the fact that he did not truly believe his own words.
>
 Raphael looked up. "I think we should leave _right now_, Master. There's no telling when Leonardo will come back."
>
 Splinter nodded. "I agree. Donatello, Michaelangelo, prepare to leave immediately. This is too urgent to wait for Leonardo to return. Should he come back while you are gone, I shall send him to meet you."
>
 Donatello and Michaelangelo looked uncomfortable with this order. They just weren't used to going out to

> battle without Leo, it wasn't right. But they weren't about to argue with Splinter, so they got up to
 leave.
>
 As they headed for the door, Casey got up as well. "I'm going too."
>
 Raphael turned around. "No Casey, it's too dangerous."
>
 Casey looked indignant. "You guys know I can hold my own just as well as you can. Besides, someone has
> to show you hose-brains where to go." He smirked. "Don't argue with me, I'm coming!"

> April was about to open her mouth too, but they all saw that coming and said in unison, "No way, April!"

> Splinter said, "I agree. Stay here with me, April. The others will be fine."

> April acquiesced, and sat back down, next to Splinter. The other four ran out the door, heading for Casey's
 van, which he and April had used to bring themselves to the sewers.
>
 When they arrived at the warehouse, which was the only place Casey could think of to start looking, they
> found nobody there. However, they did find a map, tacked to a post by a throwing star. It showed an
 area about forty miles out of the city. It looked like it was an old army base of some sort. The place
> they were to go was circled in red.

> Donatello said, to nobody in particular, "It's a trap."

> "No, really? I thought they were just being helpful." Raphael wasn't in the mood for stating the obvious.

> Casey spoke up. "It may be a trap, but it's all we have."

> Donatello nodded in agreement. "Whatever it is about her that has Shredder willing to take her like that, it
 must be important. We need to get her back. Besides, she's a friend."
>
 Michaelangelo grinned. "That, and she's a hottie."
>
 "Amen, brother."
> <p>

End
file.